

American Indians & Alaska Natives: You Have the Power to Prevent Diabetes; The Research Says So!

By the [National Diabetes Education Program](#)

There are many myths about diabetes, but it is not a myth that you have the power to prevent type 2 diabetes. Diabetes prevention is proven and possible.

“Diabetes is a major threat to our American Indian and Alaska Native communities,” says National Diabetes Education Program partner Charlene Avery, M.D. “But it doesn’t have to be. As a community, we have the power to change this by taking a few small steps to prevent type 2 diabetes – for ourselves and generations to come.”

Studies show that you can prevent or delay type 2 diabetes if you lose as little as 10 pounds by walking 30 minutes a day for 5 days a week and making healthy food choices. Take action now to prevent this serious disease. **Follow these seven steps from the NDEP to lose weight and lower your risk for type 2 diabetes:**

1. **Move more each day.** Pick something that you enjoy, and get moving! Walk, run, dance, bike, rake leaves, chop wood, or swim. Pick an activity that the whole family can enjoy.
2. **Choose healthy foods.** Eat more high fiber foods such as brightly colored vegetables, wild rice, dried beans, and fruits. Cut down on fatty and fried foods by grilling, baking, boiling, broiling, or roasting your food instead of frying. Choose lean meats such as buffalo and venison, fish, chicken and turkey, and drink skim milk. Cut or drain the fat from meat. Pick healthy snacks in between meals, such as fruit.
3. **Eat smaller portions.** You can still have foods you enjoy. Just eat them rarely, such as on special occasions or in much smaller portions and less often.
4. **Take off some weight.** Once you start eating less and moving more, you will lose weight. By losing as little as 10 pounds, you can reduce your chance of getting type 2 diabetes.
5. **Set goals you can meet.** Start by making small changes. Try being active for 15 minutes a day this week. Then each week add 5 minutes until you build up to at least 30 minutes 5 days a week. Try to cut 100 calories out of your diet each day (that’s less than one can of soda!). Slowly reduce your calories over time.
6. **Keep track of your progress.** Write down all the things you eat and drink and the number of minutes you are active each day. This is a good way to stay focused and reach your goals. Also write down your long-term goals, which are goals that you want to reach at some point in the future.
7. **Seek help.** You don’t have to prevent diabetes alone. Support can come from family, friends, your health care team, spiritual advisors, medicine people or traditional healers, co-workers, or people with diabetes. Involve your family and friends in your activities. You can help each other move more, eat less, and live a healthy life.

To order your free copy of the [We Have the Power to Prevent Diabetes](#) tip sheet, contact the National Diabetes Education Program at www.YourDiabetesInfo.org or call 1-888-693-NDEP (1-888-693-6337), TTY: 1-866-569-1162. For more information for American Indians, visit the Association of American Indian Physicians’ website at www.aaip.org or the Indian Health Services’ website at www.IHS.gov.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ National Diabetes Education Program is jointly sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with the support of more than 200 partner organizations.

Updated August 2011